



Minnesota AgrAbility Project  
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## David Glamm: A participant's perspective

I grew up on a dairy and cash crop farm near Janesville, Minn. In 1996 I took over the family dairy operation and the farming of the land. July 4, 2005, began like most days. My special friend, Audrey, and I had been invited to a neighbor's for a late supper and small fireworks display to celebrate the fourth. Evening chores were started earlier, but the silo unloader was not working properly. After finishing milking, I climbed the silo and told Audrey to turn the power on so I could give it a push like I had done so many times. Not thinking, I pushed the unloader with my left foot next to the auger. Before I could shut the power off, the auger grabbed my left shoe and pulled my leg in, making a tourniquet with my pants leg. Audrey called 911 and two hours later I was air lifted to the intensive care unit at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. I was told that I would lose part of my left leg. After my accident, friends and neighbors pitched in to care for my dairy herd and the crops during the summer until I had time to find a hired hand. I did what I could to help with milking and chores. I was not fitted with a prosthetic leg until the end of October. During this time I experienced a secondary injury to my right knee and underwent surgery in January 2006 to repair the damage.



*The hand rail assists David negotiate the steps to the parlor.*

During the recovery period I had many questions about whether I should or could continue farming and milking. In early December 2005 I met with a small group of professionals and friends. I wanted help in finding the answers, hoping that they would support my desire to continue with the farming and dairy operation.

During this meeting Tim Dolan, Sibley County Extension educator, recommended that I contact the Southwest Minnesota Dairy Profit Enhancement Team and the Minnesota AgrAbility Project. I contacted Heidi Sellner, the



*David uses the Bobcat Toolcat for many jobs.*

Southwest MN Dairy Profit Team coordinator. We met and put together my diagnostic team and she began a diagnostic review of my dairy operation. She contacted Deen Swart from the AgrAbility Project. They came to the farm and we discussed my goals, the barriers I was facing and what it would take for me to continue. Deen referred me to Rehabilitation Services in Mankato. On Jan. 24, 2006, my diagnostic team got together to share their recommendations with me. The group recommended I continue with my dairy and crop farm. They all gave input on how I could improve the financial viability of the operation and Deen indicated that by making various modifications to buildings and machinery and by adding some assistive technology items, I would be able to safely work on my farm.

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I applied for services at Rehabilitation Services and in March they authorized Deen to do a Farm Site Assessment. Deen and I met, e-mailed and spoke on the phone regularly, addressing all the barriers and possible modifications. The Assessment Report was completed and submitted to Rehabilitation Services in May 2006.

Rehabilitation Services was an invaluable resource. They followed the recommendations made by Deen and provided various assistive technology items and modifying existing building and machinery. Without the help of AgrAbility I would not be crop and dairy farming today. I certainly appreciate how friendly, knowledgeable and professional Deen Swart was.

Audrey and I were invited to attend the 2006 National AgrAbility Project Training Workshop in Jackson, Miss. in November 2006. This workshop is intended to provide technical assistance and resources

to professionals and families who farm or ranch despite a disability. Workshop sessions provided a wealth of knowledge. Some of the sessions I attended were on everyday materials that can be used to modify equipment, the impact of a disability on family members and care givers, home modifications to aid in daily living and what was new in prosthetics, to name a few. Having the opportunity to meet face to face with other farmers with disabilities and share information was the highlight for me. The National AgrAbility staff, along with the many presenters, put together a great workshop that I hope to attend again in the future.

*Written by David Glamm*

## Diabetes

While at the National AgrAbility conference, the workshop that really had an impact on me was the one on Diabetes and Obesity. The presenter, a medical doctor, talked about the connection between obesity and diabetes and the burden this public health issue is to our country and the rest of the world. Here are a few key points:

- Obesity is more prevalent than malnutrition in the world
- 16 million Americans have diabetes
- 22 million with impaired glucose tolerance
- 61 percent increase in obesity from 1991-2001
- Obesity is a stronger predictor of morbidity than poverty or smoking

In December, I became a partner in a wellness initiative in my community because I thought I could share some of this information. After joining I found this issue hit closer to home than I had anticipated. Over 60 percent of first graders in my county were overweight. Wow! This is really happening and we are not tuned into the risks that face our children. So how did this sneak up on us? Advertising? More sedentary life style? We really fell for super sizing everything and thinking we were getting a better bargain for our dollar. We never thought about the ramifications. We didn't foresee the health risks involved. Obesity and Type 2 diabetes are directly related. As many as 90 percent of individuals with Type 2 diabetes are reported to be overweight or obese. Prevention is possible and really not that difficult. By decreasing our weight by 5 percent and getting as little as 30 minutes physical activity daily we can reduce our risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. We really do need to address this issue individually and as a society. This is one issue that could bankrupt our health care system. On a smaller scale, obesity and its health-related issues affect our ability to safely do all the jobs required daily on the farm.

*Written by Al Rasmussen*

*Adapted from a presentation by Marshall Bouldin, MD*

## Minnesota AgrAbility Program meets standards. . .

In November 2006 Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota once again received a three-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) review board. CARF's purpose is to improve the quality of services that enhance the lives of the persons served. The outcome of the review is based upon an organizations' performance on a set of standards established by the commission. The Minnesota AgrAbility Program was recognized for addressing the assistive technology needs of the farmers it serves. The final report noted that "Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standard of addressing assistive technology through the AgrAbility Program, which provides assessment, consultation, assistance and training for farmers with disabilities who need adaptations to continue working in their trade."



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## Minnesotans in Mississippi

The 2006 National AgrAbility Training Workshop was held Nov. 13-16, 2006, in Jackson, Missi. The Minnesota AgrAbility Project was well represented. Attending were Al Rasmussen, project coordinator, Deen Swart, project supervisor, and David Glamm and Audrey Fries, AgrAbility participants.



*From left to right: Audrey Fries, David Glamm, Deen Swart and Al Rasmussen*

The event started with a self-guided tour of the Mississippi Agricultural Museum located in Jackson. The museum exhibits demonstrate how forestry and agriculture shaped the history and heritage of the state. Guests were then treated to a 'catfish fry with all the fixins'. The evening program began with a welcome from Dr. Ron Schuler, National AgrAbility project leader and Dr. Lester Spell, Mississippi secretary of Agriculture. Brad Kennedy was the keynote speaker. Kennedy, a 30-year-old certified prosthetist and corporal for the all-volunteer Mississippi State Guard, is an above-the-knee amputee. He shared about his experiences when his Battalion was sent to the Gulf Coast during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Kennedy was later presented with the Mississippi Magnolia Medal for rescuing a man suffering from a severe asthma attack. He also shared about his challenge of pedaling 1,370 miles across Europe. Kennedy's talk was riddled with humor and left the audience inspired. He is a remarkable young man. The evening program ended with the Farmer's Panel. Paul Gallo, host of the number-one-rated Mississippi Morning Talk Show (WFMN-FM), interviewed farmers who shared about their agricultural operations and their experience with AgrAbility.

The next two days were filled with training sessions focusing on trends in medical rehabilitation, updates in assistive technology in agriculture and service strategies to meet the variety of needs of farmers with disabilities. We all found the sessions we attended to be informative and educational. Dave and Audrey found the "Impact of a Disability on the Farm Family", "Utility Tractors", and "Duct Tape, Velcro and Beyond" sessions to be particularly helpful.

The event culminated with several tours. The morning tour took everyone to Anderson-Tully Hardwood Sawmill and Armstrong Flooring. The sawmill buys hardwood logs from rural Mississippi and a few other states to produce dimensional lumber. Armstrong Flooring is a veneer mill that produces veneers and flooring. In the afternoon, half the group toured the Civil War Battlefield Park in Vicksburg. This park is the site of the historic six-month battle where Confederate troops held off the Union Army siege. The rest of the group toured Cal-Maine Foods. Cal-Maine is the largest producer and marketer of shell eggs in the United States.

The National AgrAbility staff, the Workshop Planning Committee and Mississippi AgrAbility Project did an excellent job putting together and hosting the event. Everyone in attendance experienced true southern hospitality.



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Check out the Minnesota AgrAbility Project Web site. We have past issues of the Fence Post as well as bios and pictures of our Fenceline volunteers. Take the time to browse our site and then use the comment form on the web page to tell us what we can do to serve you better!